

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAIRO 08579 211215Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----211216Z 122786 /45

P R 211145Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5298

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT BAGHDAD

CONFIDENTIAL CAIRO 8579

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ, US

SUBJ: UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S MEETING WITH IRAQI FOREIGN
MINISTER

REF (A) STATE 115519, (B) STATE 115482 (RPTG BAGHDAD 842),

1. IN ABSENCE FAHMY IN ALEXANDRIA, I BRIEFED MINSTATE MOHAMED RIAD TODAY ON UNDERSEC HABIB'S MEETING WITH IRAQI FONMIN HAMMADI. BECAUSE OF EGYPTIAN EFFORTS IN OUR BEHALF TO URGE IRAQIS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, I THOUGHT IT BEST GIVE RIAD COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNT BASED ON REF B. I NOTED THAT, DESPITE IRAQI UNWILLINGNESS RESUME DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH US, MEETING HAD BEEN CORDIAL AND HAD INDICATED IRAQI GIVT DESIRES MAINTAIN A POLITICAL DIALOGUE. ON OUR PART, WE HAVE INDICATED OUR WILLINGNESS IMPROVE RELATIONS AND BELIEVE IRAQI LEADERSHIP MUST NOW BE GIVEN OPPORUNTITY MULL OVER HABIB'S COMMENTS AND ASSURANCES. WE WILL SUBSEQUENTLY FOLLOWUP IN APPROPRIATE FASHION. IN VIEW SADAT'S AND FAHMY'S INTEREST IN THIS MATTER, I ASKED THAT RIAD ADVISE FAHMY OF THE RESULTS

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OF HABIB'S TALK.

2. RIAD THANKED ME FOR THE ACCOUNT. HE SAID MFA HAD ALREADY RECEIVED REPORT FROM ITS AMB IN BAGHDAD ON THE HABIB/HAMMADI TALK. IRAQIS HAD BRIEFED EGYPTIAN AND OTHER ARAB AMBS AND HAD EXPLAINED THEIR REJECTION OF USG OVERTURE ON GROUNDS (A) IRAQI BELIEF THAT USG REMAINS BASICALLY HOSTILE

TOWARDS ARABS ON ARAB/ISRAELI ISSUES AND (B) USG ALLEGEDLY
INTERFERRED IN IRAQI INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

3. I REITERATED TO RIAD THAT HABIB HAD GIVEN HAMMADI ASSURANCES THAT USG HAS NOT AND WILL NOT INTERFERE IN IRAQI INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND HAD REJECTED NOTION THAT OUR POLICIES ARE HOSTILE TO THE ARABS. RAID SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS. WHILE HE THOUGHT HAMMADI'S RESPONSE WAS PREDICTABLE, HE ALSO OPINED THAT HAMMADI WOULD PERSONALLY PROBABLY HAVE PREFERRED TO GIVE A MORE POSITIVE RESPONSE. RIAD BASES THIS JUDGEMENT ON WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS FREQUENT TALKS WHICH HE HAS HAD WITH HAMMADI AT ARAB LEAGUE SESSIONS.

4. RIAD ALSO CONSIDERED IT HELPFUL THAT HAMMADI HAD MADE A POINT OF EXPLAINING THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN UNABLE TO MEET HABIB BECAUSE PRIMIN STILL CONVALESCING FROM RECENT ILLNESS. WHETHER OR NOT SADDAM IS ACTUALLY SICK OR ONLY DIPLOMATICALLY SO, RIAD THOUGHT THAT THIS COMMENT WAS IN THE NATURE OF AN "APOLOGY". IT WAS A GESTURE WHICH IRAQIS DID NOT HAVE TO MAKE, BUT THE FACT THAT THEY DID SO WAS A GOOD THING.

5. RIAD WIL BRIEF FAHMY ABOVE ASAP. I WILL ALSO DO SO
DIRECTLY WHEN I NEXT SEE FAHMY.

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